

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 00311 121156Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-01
INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04
USIA-06 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07
/110 W

-----121224Z 016591 /23-12

R 120725Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0955
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0311

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, AF
SUBJ: AFGHAN OIL DISCOVERY

REF: 76 KABUL 8965 (NOTAL)

1. DURING MY JANUARY 8 CALL ON "DE FACTO" FOREIGN MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH, I ASKED HIM FOR FURTHER DETAILS REGARDING THE NEW OIL STRIKE IN MORTHWEST AFGHANISTAN (REFTEL). AFTER REMINDING ME THAT THIS MATTER IS STILL A "STATE SECRET," ABDULLAH CONFIRMED THAT AFGHAN GEOLOGISTS HAD INDEED FOUND A DOME NEAR BAND-E-GUNDOW (NEAR BAND-E-SABZAK ON THE BORDER BETWEEN HERAT AND BADGHIS PROVINCES). ALTHOUGH TWO MORE YEARS MAY BE NEEDED FULLY TO ASSESS THE FIND, WHICH WAS STRUCK AT A DEPTH OF 900 METERS, PRESENT ESTIMATES ARE THAT THE DEPOSIT IS ABOUT NINE MILLION TONS. ABDULLAH ADDED THAT SMALLER DEPOSITS HAD BEEN FOUND SOME TIME AGO NEAR ALI GUL (NORTHWEST OF QAISAR IN FARYAB PROVINCE) AND AT KASHAIR (NEAR SARI-PUL IN JAWZJAN PROVINCE). THE AFGHANS ARE HOPEFUL FOR ADDITIONAL STRIKES IN THIS ROUGH 180 KILOMETERS CRESENT

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 KABUL 00311 121156Z

BETWEEN SARI-PUL IN THE EAST AND BAND-E-GANDOW IN THE WEST, WHICH THEY NOW ESTIMATE CONTAINS RESERVES OF ABOUT 30 MILLION TONS.

2. THE "DE FACTO" FOREIGN MINISTER WAS OBVIOUSLY PROUD OF THE FACT THAT THE AFGHANS HAD MADE THE FIND WITHOUT SOVIET ASSISTANCE. THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT BEEN HELPFUL, HE

SAID, SINCE THEY DO NOT NEED OIL BUT ARE ONLY INTERESTED
IN AFGHAN NATURAL GAS.

3. COMMENT: ABDULLAH WAS SELLING SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION SOMEWHAT SHORT, SINCE THE SOVIETS HAVE FOR YEARS BEEN INVOLVED IN ALL PHASES OF NATURAL GAS AND PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION IN NORTHWEST AFGHANISTAN. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS HAVE EXTENDED (IN 1972) A \$5.6 MILLION LINE OF CREDIT FOR A PETROLEUM REFINERY, OIL EXTRACTION IN THE SHIBERGAN AREA, AND PIPING TO THE ANGOT DEPOT FACILITIES. ALTHOUGH THIS CREDIT HAS NOT YET BEEN DRAWN DOWN, THE AFGHANS ARE COUNTING ON THIS ASSISTANCE TO BUILD A 200,000 TON PER YEAR REFINERY AND, AS ABDULLAH HIMSELF REMARKED DURING OUR CONVERSATION, THE FACT HOPE TO EXPAND THIS CAPACITY IN LIGHT OF THE NEW FINDS. IF AFGHAN ESTIMATES ARE CORRECT, THE NEW FIND WILL MORE THAN COVER AFGHAN DOMESTIC PETROLEUM NEEDS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE (CURRENT CONSUMPTION, ESSENTIALLY ALL IMPORTED, RUNS ABOUT 250,000 TONS PER YEAR). END COMMENT

ELIOT

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